

Bob Dole

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

NEWS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sunday, November 19, 1995

Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

BOSNIA TALKS

There are news reports indicating that the administration is trying to wrap up peace talks in Dayton, Ohio, by tomorrow morning.

No doubt about it, the administration has put a great deal of effort into this diplomatic process. A significant number of our diplomats have been working around the clock to get an agreement. Their hard work should be recognized.

However, I hope that in their understandable haste, our negotiators will not lose sight of the objective -- which is not just to secure a peace, but to secure a just and lasting peace. Most members of Congress would agree that for an agreement to have a reasonable prospect of achieving a stable peace, it must include the following provisions:

- (1) A clear demarcation of defensible borders for Bosnia and Herzegovina and resolution of all territorial issues among the parties;
- (2) Clear lines of demarcation between the military forces of the parties to the agreement and procedures for separating the forces;
- (3) Concurrence by all parties and witnesses to the agreement to multilateral lifting of the arms embargo on Bosnia and Herzegovina upon entry into force of the agreement;
- (4) Acceptance by all parties and witnesses to the agreement to U.S. involvement in an effort to equip, arm and train Bosnian federation forces;
- (5) Establishment of clear standards for violations of the agreement and the unrestricted use of force by NATO to include air power as necessary to respond to violations of the agreement which threaten not only the peace, but the security of our forces;
- (6) An end to military intervention by the governments of Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- (7) The dismantlement of the integrated air defense network linkages between Serbia and Bosnian-Serb held areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- (8) Full NATO implementation of the deny flight operation;
- (9) Measures to ensure that indicted war criminals are not in positions of authority, including any elected office.

It seems to me that these are the minimum elements of a viable peace agreement. Without these elements, it is unlikely that a genuine peace will hold. Without these elements, it is unlikely that Bosnia will survive.

We should not mistake securing any peace agreement in Dayton with securing a stable peace. No matter how difficult the negotiations are, if they fail to achieve an agreement that secures the integrity and independence of Bosnia they will have been a waste of time.

Also essential to a stable peace, is restoring public confidence and trust in the government, institutions, and leaders of Bosnia. Absent justice, there will be no trust and no peace will endure. For the long-suffering Bosnian people, to believe in the peace, they must witness for themselves that justice will be done in Bosnia. Justice is the only comfort we can provide to mothers and fathers who have lost their children to war crimes. This will not be a just peace if war criminals remain at large and unaccountable for their heinous crimes.

Furthermore, any peace will be short-lived if it does not provide the Bosnians with the authority and the means to defend their territory and their people. Absent a stable military balance, those who have clearly been the aggressors in this conflict will seek to press their advantage again. Whatever agreement is initialed in Dayton, it must provide for lifting the arms embargo and for addressing the existing military imbalance. If it does not, it will serve no greater purpose than to delay an inevitable return to hostilities. It will simply be another invitation to future aggression.

(more)

Placing these important matters aside, foremost on the minds of the American people is whether or not young Americans should be ordered to enforce a peace agreement in Bosnia.

In my view, the deployment of American forces into harms' way requires very careful deliberation on the part of the administration and the Congress. The President has informed me that he will come to Congress for support. That is the right thing to do. It would be unwise to send American forces without the support of the Congress and the American people. Right now, I do not believe that the President has it.

He certainly will not have it, if a peace agreement does not include the provisions I have mentioned. But, he is also unlikely to receive our support if the implementation plan for our military forces does not, at the very least, include the following essential provisions:

- (1) Well-defined and clearly stated mission objectives achievable through military means;
- (2) Robust rules of engagement allowing for disproportionate responses, as appropriate, to any attacks on U.S. and NATO forces and no restrictions or impediments on the ability of U.S. and NATO military forces to defend themselves;
- (3) U.S. military forces will operate only under a unified NATO command whose orders and authority cannot be constrained, conditioned, blocked or vetoed by any other party including the united nations;
- (4) U.S. military forces shall use the authority granted in any annexes to the maximum extent consistent with their resources and shall act to deter, defeat or punish any violations from whatever source;
- (5) Clear criteria for measuring progress toward achieving the objectives of the operation, a detailed exit strategy, and adequate resources for achieving these objectives and effecting a safe exit for all U.S. forces from Bosnia;
- (6) Procedures for integrating appropriate UNPROFOR forces currently in Bosnia into a NATO-led implementation force and procedures for withdrawing any other UNPROFOR forces from Bosnia;
- (7) Specific provisions to prevent conflict between U.S. and non-NATO forces and members of the civilian population of Bosnia.

I believe that these criteria are very simple and very basic. I am not certain that Congress will go along with sending American forces even if these provisions are included in a peace agreement and implementation plan. However, I am certain that without these elements, not only will Congress overwhelmingly disapprove of the peace agreement and the plan to send American forces as peacekeepers, but that neither of these plans will have a chance of succeeding.

The administration says that NATO will collapse if the United States does not send Americans into Bosnia as peacekeepers, but what happens to NATO if Americans are used to keep a peace which cannot be kept? What happens if we send Americans without adequate authority and provision to protect themselves? NATO should remain strong and united, however, unity in failure is the worst possible outcome. How much worse off would NATO be if U.S. and other NATO forces were deployed in Bosnia only to leave in failure?

Which brings me to my final question: why this option? Why is sending 20,000 American troops to Bosnia the only option being considered by the Clinton administration? Why was no consideration given to using American air power and American supply lines for ground forces provided by our European allies?

Many questions remain. The President has not yet made the case for American involvement in Bosnia on this massive scale. The Congress has clearly stated its view that the President should seek authorization for any deployment to Bosnia. The Congress has also clearly stated its preference for lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia so that Bosnians may defend themselves. And we have done this time after time after time on a bipartisan basis. Many of us who supported lifting the embargo, did so not just because of our support for Bosnia's inherent right to self-defense, because we hoped we could avoid sending thousands of Americans into Bosnia to defend Bosnians. But, the President chose not to do that -- and now we are where we are.

We fully understand the constitutional authority of the President of the United States. We also understand the constitutional responsibility of the Congress. There is no greater responsibility for an elected representative than to prevent the needless shedding of American blood. We intend to exercise that responsibility with the utmost care.

###

* Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 5:20 p.m.